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CITE [REDACTED]
COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM
DOI 1 NOVEMBER 1968
SUBJECT VICE PRESIDENT KY'S REACTION TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S
BOMBING HALT SPEECH
~~1968 VIETNAM, SAIGON~~

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1. VICE PRESIDENT NGUYEN CAO KY'S INITIAL REACTION TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S 1 NOVEMBER SPEECH ANNOUNCING A BOMBING HALT WAS ONE OF ANGER AND FRUSTRATION. KY SAID THAT THE UNILATERAL NATURE OF THE BOMBING HALT EXPOSED "THE TRUE FACE OF THE AMERICANS" AND THE NEED TO GUARD AGAINST FURTHER AMERICAN PRES-SURE AND DUPLICITY.

2. BY THE EVENING OF 1 NOVEMBER KY HAD CALMED DOWN AND WAS MORE PHILOSOPHICAL ABOUT THE JOHNSON ANNOUNCEMENT. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT PRESIDENT JOHNSON HAD CHOSEN HIS WORDS CARE-FULLY, RECOGNIZING SOUTH VIETNAMESE SENSITIVITIES. KY STILL BELIEVED, HOWEVER, THAT THE AMERICANS ACTED FOR DOMESTIC POLITI-CAL REASONS, SHOWED LITTLE APPRECIATION FOR SOUTH VIETNAMESE VIEWPOINTS, AND PRESSED THEIR CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT (GVN) WITH UNNECESSARY HASTE. STILL, KY REASONED, THE WAR MUST GO ON AND THE GVN MUST MAKE THE BEST OF A BAD SITUATION AND WORK TO PRESERVE ITS INDEPENDENCE.

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3. KY BLAMED THE BASIC WEAKNESS AND THE OVER-DEPENDENCE OF THE THIEU GOVERNMENT ON THE AMERICANS DURING THE PAST YEAR FOR ENCOURAGING THE U.S. TO TAKE THE VIETNAMESE FOR GRANTED. HE HOPED THIEU HAD LEARNED A LESSON AND WOULD MAINTAIN A MORE FORCEFUL AND INDEPENDENT STAND ON FUTURE ISSUES VITAL TO THE GVN'S SECURITY.

4. KY HAS GIVEN THIEU HIS ASSURANCE OF FULL COOPERATION IN REPAIRING THE DAMAGE DONE TO THE GVN BY THE BOMBING HALT TALKS. THE PAST TWO WEEKS HAVE CLEARLY BROUGHT THE TWO MEN CLOSER TOGETHER. THEY HAVE APPEARED WITH INCREASING FREQUENCY TOGETHER IN PUBLIC AND CONSULT OFTEN ON THE PHONE AND FACE-TO-FACE. IF THIEU CONTINUES TO SEEK KY'S ADVICE AND SUPPORT IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, THE FORMER DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEM MAY BE REPAIRED. KY BELIEVES THAT THIEU SHOULD PUBLICIZE THE US/GVN TALKS OF THE PAST TWO WEEKS TO SHOW THE PEOPLE THE NATURE OF THE PRESSURE THE GVN HAS BEEN UNDER AND TO DRAMATIZE THE STRENGTH OF THE GVN'S LEADERSHIP AND SO PROMOTE NATIONAL UNITY.

5. KY BELIEVES THAT THE UNILATERAL NATURE OF THE BOMBING HALT PRECLUDES BOTH THE GVN'S RUSHING TO THE PARIS TALKS AS AN EAGER PARTICIPANT AND HIS OWN PRESENCE AT PARIS, EITHER AS DELEGATION HEAD OR AS A BACKGROUND POLICY MAKER. HIS OTHER REMARKS APPARENTLY SUGGEST THAT HE FEELS THAT THE GVN HAS LITTLE ALTERNATIVE TO MAINTAINING ITS OBSERVER DELEGATION IN PARIS.

6. KY HAS SUGGESTED THAT PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BEST IF BOTH HANOI AND THE U.S. WITHDREW FROM SOUTH VIETNAM AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. HE BELIEVES THAT, GIVEN A REASONABLE DEGREE OF UNITY, THE GVN IS NOW STRONG ENOUGH TO DEFEAT THE VIET CONG ON THE BATTLEFIELD AND THE NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT POLITICALLY.

~~UN DISSEM: STATE (AMBASSADOR BUNKER, DEPUTY
AMBASSADOR BERGER, POLITICAL COUNSELOR) USMACV (GENERAL ABRAMS,
AMBASSADOR KROMER, MAJOR GENERAL DAVIDSON) 7TH AIR FORCE
(GENERAL BROWN) CINCPAC PACFLT ARPAC PACAF~~

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